659[a]

...command, e.g. early marriage, seclusion of women, treatment of widows, etc. So divisions of real significance are now not vertical sections of society by difference of religion, but horizontal divisions into strata differentiated from one another by social and economic conditions."

The above criticism, no doubt, brings into broad relief the apparent heterogeneities and defects of the religious basis of classification, and a case for abandonment of this basis was made out on the strength of statistical data. For instance, it was suggested that in spite of the similarity of race between the Moslem population of Bengal and of Bihar and Orissa the rate of growth registered by these communities was entirely different owing to difference of tradition and economic circumstances. Similarly the distinction between Hinduism and tribal religions affords an satisfactory basis for explaining variations since the absence of a hard and fast line dividing the two detracts considerably from the reliability of the statistics. In Burma, again, the distinction by religion has been superseded by racial classification. The validity and utility of the classification by religion having thus been assailed it is only natural to enquire if we can find a better substitute for it by drawing a classification on social or economic basis.

In this country it is very difficult to divide the population according to social and economic grades, and it would be really too much to expect that the gentleman enumerator on whom devolves the ultimate responsibility of filling in Census schedules with his deficient education and knowledge would be able to satisfactorily conduct the economic and the social stratification of the populace in his charge when we find that his work on the simple schedule is attended with blunders in spite of clear and unambiguous instructions. Occupation does not provide a reliable guide as a classification based on the occupational scheme would be too complicated and intricate and would not lead to better results than the occupation returns themselves which represent one of the most unsatisfactory pieces of the Census statistics. A division by caste which is too complex, too local and too controversial a factor to form a social or economic division even of Hindu society would be equally unsatisfactory. Race offers no better substitute since like the caste the classification on this basis would require numerous categories and to show the Census statistics for such a large number of divisions would be too voluminous and unmanageable.

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The law of the country seems at present inextricably bound with religion since each of the religious communities have their separate personal laws which govern their daily life and conduct and the development of the country towards democracy is also proceeding on religious or communal rather than nationalistic lines. Since franchise and representation to the various public bodies, the provincial legislative councils and the central legislature is again based on communal considerations it is but natural that the people have become habituated to class themselves under religious labels instead of economic or social divisions.

In view of the above difficulties in the way of selection of a basis other than religion will have to be retained as a basis of classification as it still survives as inestimable sway over the public mind and is one of the clearest and distinctive marks of differentiation[1] mankind and its displacement for a long time to predominate.

659[b]

197. **What is Religion.**—It is outside the scope of a Census report to indulge in an elaborate discussion of the definition of the word 'Religion' although it is at the same time essential to give a brief explanation of the meaning of the expression that there are so many Hindus, Moslems, Christians and Buddhists. Religion has various aspects, philosophical, ethical, ceremonial, spiritual or personal and communal and to a large majority religion represents to the individual that particular outlook and attitude towards the universe and his fellowmen which forms the tradition of his family and his clan. 'Census' as remarked by the Census Commissioner for India in 1911 " is not concerned with personal religion but is an attempt to record religion in its communal aspect, merely distinguishing those who lay claim to one or other of the recognised sectional labels without looking too closely into the validity of their claims."

[1] Ghurye: read "differentiation" of caste chart p. 180, category IIc — Analytic